



US Army Corps
of Engineers

Upper Mississippi River - Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study

UMR-IWW System Navigation Study Newsletter

October 1999

Vol. 6 No. 3

Diverse Viewpoints Aired at Summer Workshops

Issues ranging from international trade to the health of the environment were raised in a series of workshops, held in late July and early August and summarized throughout this month's newsletter.

The workshops were part of the Navigation Study of the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway, a study that will culminate in a Congressional recommendation on what, if any, improvements should be made to the current system of locks and dams.

The more than 2,000 comments received from the 738 people who participated will be used by the Corps to help select a recommended plan among several alternatives now being examined.

While many comments had been expressed at previous public meetings or

open houses, the public input still is making a difference in the study, team members say. As a result of comments, for example, the study team is looking at construction scheduling again to see if locks could be extended at Peoria and La Grange for a cost lower than currently estimated.



Comments generated in St. Paul are shared with the larger group

Several people also advised the Corps to build new locks rather than extend the existing, aging facilities. The Corps is conducting additional studies to see if innovative construction techniques could make new locks more cost-effective

than extending the existing locks.

The study team also is working to complete its system-wide environmental analysis and plans to present the preliminary findings in the next issue of the Navigation Study newsletter. Many people who attended the workshops

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expressed concern that system environmental impact information was not yet complete, saying they could not provide meaningful comments on the study without it. Publishing the results in the newsletter will allow the information to reach the general public without holding up the study progress, team members said.



Small break-out sessions gave everyone a say

People attending the meetings represented diverse backgrounds and expressed preferences for plans ranging from no improvements to some of the most extensive alternatives evaluated.

Such diverse viewpoints will be weighed by the study team as it develops more detailed information for alternative plans, including system environmental impacts, to be presented at the Nov. 18 meeting of the Governors' Liaison Committee. Public input is one factor that influences plan selection and can be weighed in a decision to diverge from the National Economic Development Plan, calculated as that which brings the maximum net economic benefit to the nation consistent with protecting the nation's environment.

Following are some of the comments that emerged as meeting themes. Many of these concerns are addressed in the Question-and-Answer section that begins on Page 3 of this newsletter. The list of alternative plans presented at the workshops was published in the June newsletter, which is available on the study web site: http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/pdw/nav_study.

Under the area of engineering, some workshop participants wondered whether new lock extensions could be constructed with as little disruption to river traffic as assumed by the alternative plans. Others asked how the project will affect flood control plans. Some attendees asked the Corps to consider replacing existing locks with new 1,200-foot locks, rather than continuing to build onto a 60-year-old system.

Recreation was a theme raised often, both from people wondering if added barge traffic would negatively affect recreation and tourism and others who believe recreational boats to be more responsible than barges for environmental impacts. Some



Listening closely

attendees asked how recreational craft will get through the locks if barge traffic increases as a result of improvements. Others questioned why benefits of increased tourism and recreational activities that could result from a more natural river ecosystem were not factored into the analysis.

Concerns expressed on the environmental studies followed two major themes. The first was that some believe the ecology of the river system already is stressed or in decline and that any increases in barge traffic would further hasten this

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Study Questions and Answers

Following is a summary of some of the common issues raised in the workshops, presented in a question-and-answer format. Answers were provided by study team members with expertise in the specific area.

Q: *Why didn't the study consider non-structural approaches to reducing congestion like more sophisticated scheduling?*

A: The study team did consider a wide range of potential structural and non-structural small-scale measures. Scheduling was one of 92 initial small-scale measures considered, and it was carried forward to a detailed analysis stage. The team determined that river navigation was too unlike air traffic, for example, to copy the air traffic control model. The current system allows the Corps to use the lock as effectively as a scheduling program without additional data or management requirements. Also, scheduling does not substantially reduce the cost of water transportation.

Q: *Why not build new locks instead of extending old ones?*

A: Based on present information gathered for the feasibility study, extending the existing lock is the most economically efficient. If 1,200-foot lock extensions are justified, some further analysis of the potential for new 1,200-foot locks may again be considered as the team does more detailed engineering work. Further consideration would be given to new locks if additional savings are identified, if the team finds further benefits from having two lock chambers, or if concerns develop with lock extensions.

Q: *Shouldn't the study consider global competition in the analysis?*

A: Under the specific guidance given to the Corps, the study team does not directly consider global competition in its calculation of net economic benefit of a given plan. However, in moving to a recommended plan, global competition may be a factor that is considered in selecting one plan over another, as well as factors such as public acceptability, environmental consequences, socioeconomic impacts, etc.

Q: *Why do lock extensions at Peoria and La Grange appear to produce significantly lower benefits than lock extensions on the Upper Mississippi?*

A: There are two reasons. Unlike on the Upper Mississippi, these two Illinois Waterway locks have open pass conditions. During higher flows, the wicket dams at these sites can be lowered to allow traffic to go over the top without using the lock, thus lowering the benefits of a new lock. That process is used roughly 40 to 45 percent of the time. In addition, the Illinois Waterway operates year-round. Because of that, any construction on the lock significantly impacts transportation and thus increases the overall project cost. At the request of the state of Illinois, however, the team is looking to find ways to use open pass periods to construct lock extensions or identify other innovative ways to construct extensions and thus minimize navigation impacts and reduce overall costs.

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Q: *How are you going to account for uncertainties in the analysis?*

A: The team will perform sensitivity analyses on traffic projections, demand curves and the costs of alternatives to river transportation. While the team is using what it believes to be the best estimates, it also looks at how the results might differ if, for example, traffic demand ends up higher or lower than anticipated. For environmental models, the team is using a "risk-based" approach. This means the models can account for uncertainty in the component variables (for example, the number of fish in a given area) and describe the outputs in terms of this uncertainty. Finally, the team will do a qualitative assessment, seeking professional opinions about areas that might affect the study outcome but which are more difficult to quantify such as global economies, ethanol subsidies and agri-business technologies.

Q: *What part of the economic analysis for grain was based on data from Iowa, and why?*

A: The economic analysis is not based on just "Iowa data." However, the team used information from Iowa relating to the distance grain travels to reach a loading point on the water to help determine the elasticity of product transportation demand. Similar information was not available for other study states. All other aspects of grain movement, such as tonnage, water transportation cost and alternative mode cost are based on geographically-specific data.

Q: *Why don't you remove all the locks and dams?*

A: The existing locks and dams on the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway generate more than \$650 million in annual transportation savings to the Upper Mississippi River region, compared to an annual cost of approximately \$115 million to operate and maintain the system. In addition to losses to commercial navigation, removing the locks and dams would have negative consequences for city water supplies, recreation, and in some cases, the environment.

Q: *Why were meetings held before all the system-wide environmental information was available and how will this information be included?*

A: The environmental analysis was not yet complete in time for the scheduled workshops, but the team opted to share as much information as possible with the public and to keep the study on its current timetable. The team also has not yet completed the analysis of the environmental impacts of alternative modes such as rail in terms of fuel use and emissions. When the information is completed, it will be shared in a study newsletter and posted on the study's web site. Currently, site-specific environmental cost estimates are included in economic calculations. Regardless of how the overall impacts are recorded, all environmental factors will be considered in developing the recommended plan.

Q: *What has changed since November 1998 when Preliminary Economic Findings were released?*

A: Preliminary studies using various scenarios showed justification for numerous options including both small-scale (requiring no major construction) and large-scale (lock construction) measures as well as a variety of combinations. Since the initial findings were released, construction costs were lowered as a result of refining the “contingency” costs – the amount built into the budget in case actual construction costs are higher than anticipated. These contingency costs were reduced due to increasing experience in working with new innovative construction approaches. The benefits of having an extended lock that needs less rehabilitation than the existing, unimproved structure also were included. The team also eliminated costly approach improvements that provided only minor time savings in the plans that involve lock construction. Finally, the Corps has finalized its economic demand curves. The combination of these changes has improved the cost-effectiveness of large-scale measures over previous analyses.

Workshops continued from page 2

decline. Also, many felt that the study schedule has not allowed sufficient data to be collected, and as a result, the environmental studies are inadequate to characterize potential impacts.

Some people who attended workshops asked the Corps to consider a scheduling system, much like that used by air traffic controllers, in lieu of new construction and suggested that any improvements could have a catastrophic effect on the environment. Others said they believed an improved lock and dam system would have a net positive, not negative, environmental effect because commodities would otherwise be shipped by rail or truck resulting in more air pollution and less fuel efficiency.

Many also pointed out related economic issues, with many speakers asking the study team to take into account the need for the United States to remain

competitive in international trade. South America, for example, is improving its transportation system and will be able to sell goods at comparatively lower prices, some speakers noted.

All comments will be considered during the study and in writing the draft Feasibility Report, scheduled for release in the summer of 2000. Another series of public meetings will follow



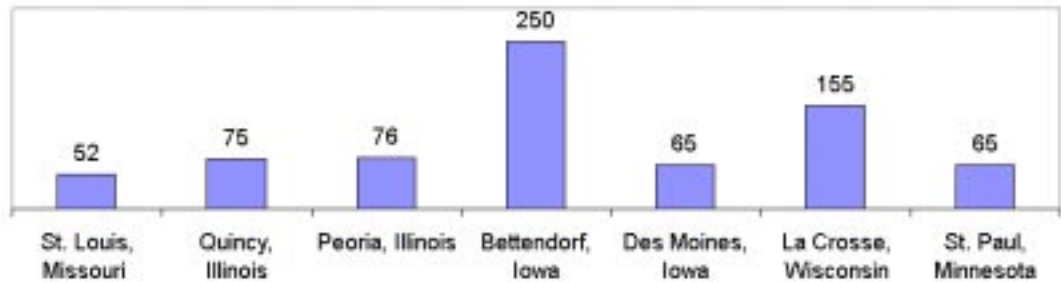
Project Manager Gary Loss details the study progress and early findings

the release of the draft report. That input will help shape the final report scheduled to be sent to the Corps' Washington headquarters in December 2000. ♦

WORKSHOP RECAP

The workshop format was identical in each of the seven cities. Sessions began with a presentation detailing the study process and findings, including nine alternative plans and the projected cost and net economic benefits of each. After the large group presentation, attendees met in smaller groups, allowing everyone a chance to share opinions on the alternatives and provide further input. More than 2,000 comments were recorded within the small groups from the 738 people who attended the workshops. These comments will be included in a content analysis report. Each session ended with the sharing of issues raised in small groups, a question-and-answer period, and an open forum that allowed people to make statements and share their viewpoints.

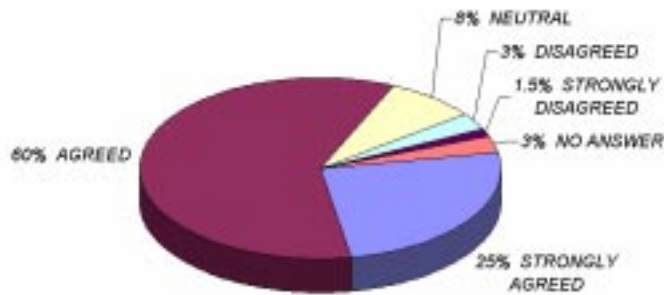
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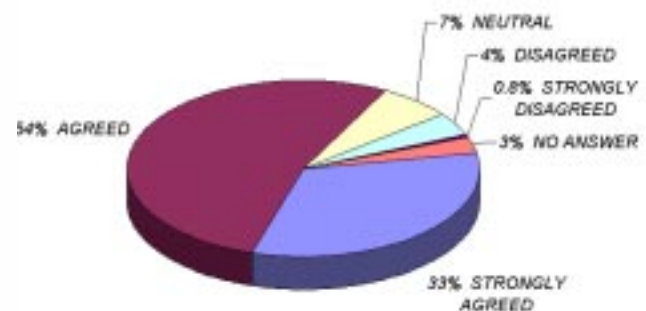
RESPONSE

A total of 257 workshop participants completed written comment sheets. While opinions on the best study outcome varied widely, workshop participants said overwhelmingly they felt the workshop gave them a chance to both learn and be heard. Here's how they answered the two basic questions:

The workshop provided an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the study's initial alternatives:



This workshop provided ample opportunity for everyone to offer comments about the initial alternatives:



FOR MORE INFORMATION

The transcripts from each of the seven public workshops are available for viewing on the study's web page at http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/pdw/nav_study. These unedited transcripts are being made available to the public as they are received from the contracted court stenographers. The transcripts also are available for purchase in the following formats: Compact disk with all seven transcripts (\$10); 3 1/2" diskette with all seven transcripts (\$5); and paper copy (St. Louis - \$6; Quincy - \$4; Peoria - \$5; Bettendorf - \$7; Des Moines - \$8; La Crosse \$9; St. Paul - \$6; package of all seven transcripts - \$35.)

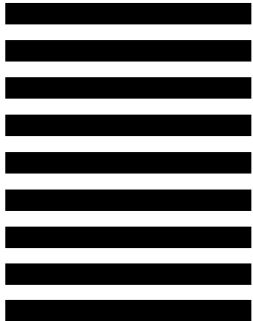
To order a transcript, please indicate which item you wish to order (if diskette, please indicate whether you want the files in Word or ASCII format) and mail a check payable to "FAO, USAED Rock Island" to: *District Engineer, U.S. Army Engineer District, Rock Island; ATTN: Sue Simmons (CEMVR-PM-AE); Clock Tower Building; P.O. Box 2004; Rock Island, Illinois; 61204-2004.*

The complete content analysis report on the workshops will be available this fall and also will be posted on the study's web site. A CD, diskette and paper copy will be available for purchase, with prices yet to be determined.

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**US Army Corps
of Engineers**

October 1999

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER - ILLINOIS WATERWAY SYSTEM NAVIGATION STUDY
COMMENT SHEET

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

note: Name, Telephone, and Address are optional and can be left blank

(Please provide your comments in the space below)

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Please check **ONE** category below that represents your primary interest in the study.

<input type="checkbox"/> Waterborne Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal Government (Congressional)	<input type="checkbox"/> Regional Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Business/Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal Government (All Other)	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
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<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> City/County Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal Interest
<input type="checkbox"/> Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)

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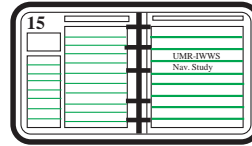
RED study highlights potential job growth

Nearly 30,000 temporary and permanent jobs would be created under one alternative being considered as part of the Navigation Study.

The results of a Regional Economic Development study were shared for the first time at the public workshops. The model traces expenditures and transportation cost savings throughout the economy in terms of additional full-time employment, wage and salary income, and output or the value of goods produced.

Alternative "H," for example, would create an estimated 24,200 jobs during project construction and 5,600 permanent jobs. Of those, 7,300 would be created in the state of Illinois during the construction period, along with another 880 perma-

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Upcoming Meetings

Navigation Environmental Coordination Committee

October 20, 1999
Holiday Inn
Moline, IL

8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

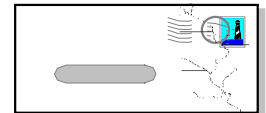
Governors' Liaison Committee

November 18, 1999
St. Louis Airport Hilton
St. Louis, MO

8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Check 1-800-872-8822 for final meeting times and locations.

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JOBS

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nent jobs that would result from the increased commerce. That alternative involves the extension of Locks 20-25 on the Upper Mississippi River, construction of 1,200-foot guidewalls at Upper Mississippi Locks 14-18 and new 1,200-foot locks at Peoria and La Grange on the Illinois Waterway.

Alternative Plan "B," which would involve the construction of 1,200-foot guidewalls at Locks 20-25 and mooring buoys, but no lock extensions, would result in an estimated 5,200 jobs during construction and 2,000 permanent jobs. Illinois' portion would be 1,300 jobs during construction and 300 permanent positions. Projected benefits for other study states can be found on the study's web site under the workshop presentation link. Further breakdowns of regional gains in employment, income, and output by 25 industrial sectors, including agriculture, mining, construction, manufacturing, trade, finance, insurance and services also will be available as reports are completed. ♦

Questions?

○ For general study information, call Gary Loss, project manager, at 309/794-5355 or write to the address below, ATTN: CEMVR-PM-P or visit our home page at:

http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/pdw/nav_study.htm

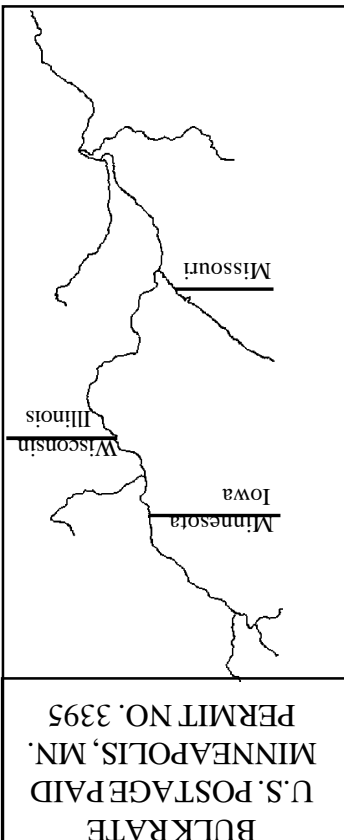
○ For information on Public Involvement meetings, call the toll-free telephone number, 800/USA(872)-8822. Meeting announcements will be in the Public Involvement menu. Or call Kevin Bluhm, public involvement coordinator, at 651/290-5247, or write to the address below, ATTN: CEMVR-PM-AE.

○ To be added to the mailing list for future newsletters, study updates, and meeting announcements, write to the address below, ATTN: CEMVR-PM-AE, or call the toll-free telephone number and leave your information in the Public Involvement menu.

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